

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A system for retracting opposed surfaces of a bone joint, said system comprising:

a cannula having a passage to percutaneously access a site proximate the opposed surfaces; and

a retractor including a shaft and an inflatable bladder disposed at the end of the shaft, said retractor being introducable through the cannula passage so that the bladder may be positioned between the opposed surfaces.

2. A system as in claim 1, wherein the inflatable bladder comprises at least one rigid surface.

3. A system as in claim 1, wherein the inflatable bladder comprises areas of rigidity interleaved with areas of more elasticity.

4. A system as in claim 1, wherein the inflatable bladder is eccentrically shaped or mounted on the shaft.

5. A system as in claim 1, wherein the inflatable bladder does not stretch when fully inflated.

6. A system as in claim 1, wherein the inflatable bladder operates at inflation pressures from 10 mmHg to 1000 mmHg.

7. A system as in claim 1, wherein the inflatable bladder operates at inflation pressures from 100 mmHg to 1000 mmHg.

8. A system as in claim 1, wherein the shaft is rigid.

9. A system as in claim 1, wherein the shaft is flexible.

10. A system as in any of claims 1 to 9, further comprising a viewing scope.

11. A system as in any of claim 1, further comprising an interventional instrument.